



Yarraville West Primary School

Inquiry Policy

Rationale:

Inquiry learning is an active thinking and learning process that requires our students to:

- form questions that enable purposeful and worthwhile information gathering
- set goals for their own learning
- make plans for finding the information they need
- decide on the appropriate sources of information
- evaluate the information they gather
- use their data to form answers that build on and extend their prior knowledge and lead to deeper understanding

Students are both problem posers and problem solvers within inquiry learning. Our Inquiry Curriculum is based around concepts (big ideas) rather than topics.

Goals:

- To use an inquiry process through all curriculum areas
- To design Inquiries that allow our students to develop skills, behaviours and understandings that equip them to be lifelong 21st Century learners

Our Inquiry Curriculum involves our students:

- asking questions, building on prior knowledge and making their own discoveries
- finding information from primary and other sources to answer questions and develop deep conceptual understandings
- making connections between ideas, learning areas and real life experiences
- reflecting on and taking action on their understandings

Implementation:

Guidelines

We have a Whole School Inquiry Curriculum Framework that has been developed over the past four years. It is a living document, which is constantly being evaluated and adapted as necessary. The Framework ensures that units are underpinned by and meet the AusVELS Curriculum and Cross Curriculum Priorities appropriate to student learning needs. Inquiry units are drawn from the following:

Domains

Discipline Based Learning - The Arts (comprising Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts) Humanities (comprising History, Geography and Economics) and Science.

Physical, Personal and Social Learning - Civics and Citizenship, Health and Physical Education, Interpersonal Development and Personal Learning.

Interdisciplinary Learning – Communication, Design, Creativity and Technology, Information and Communications Technology and Thinking Processes.

The Domains of English and Mathematics are integrated throughout our Inquiries.

Cross Curriculum Priorities: Sustainability, Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

Units in the Framework are listed as topics, however our Inquiry Curriculum is designed to be concept driven. This means that there is some scope for differentiation amongst topics, as long as the concepts remain the same.

Our Whole School Inquiry Curriculum Framework has been built around the Core Commonalities created by YWPS, based on documentation developed by the Melbourne-Maribyrnong Cluster. We also worked with Inquiry consultant Dr Jeni Wilson.

Our Core Commonalities are:

How We Shape Our World

The Circle of Life

The Natural World

Time and Place

Our Search For Meaning

The Arts

The Framework also designed to incorporate the YWPS Inquiry Curriculum Values of *Wellbeing, Community, Innovation* and *Sustainability*.

In order to have a guaranteed and viable curriculum for our students, we incorporate only 4 units each year. The curriculum is designed to be delivered over a two-year cycle in order to cover all relevant content. This framework provides the GUARANTEED curriculum for our students. Teaching teams have the flexibility to add in mini units as they see fit.

Classroom implementation:

Teachers follow an agreed Inquiry model which involves the following steps: Tuning In, Finding Out, Sorting Out, Going Further, Reflection, Action (Kath Murdoch/Jeni Wilson model).

Inquiry skills will be explicitly taught including, questioning techniques, research, thinking, cooperative and social skills, making connections with other learning and real life, making generalisations, taking action and reflecting on their learning.

Formative and summative assessment will be incorporated into the Inquiry process including negotiated criteria for assessing student learning. e.g: rubrics, graphic organisers, presentations and reflections. Students prior knowledge will be taken into account through pre testing activities in the Tuning In phase.

Teachers will use a variety of learning experiences to provide for individual learning styles, abilities and interests to ensure that students are engaged.

Students will set themselves personalised learning goals, negotiated with the teacher.

Students will explore content from various sources including multi media and printed texts and real life experiences where possible (including excursions and incursions).

Students will demonstrate their learning by creating a variety of products that demonstrate their understandings.

At the end of each unit, teachers will identify what students have accomplished by way of knowledge, skills and understandings.

Evaluation:

The Whole School Curriculum Framework will be reviewed annually by teaching teams and the Inquiry Professional Learning Team. The Inquiry Curriculum Policy shall be reviewed in 3 years.

References:

<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au>

<http://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum.html>

<http://www.rollinghillsps.vic.edu.au>

Focus on Inquiry (2nd Edition) Dr Jeni Wilson and Lesley Wing Jan (2009)

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